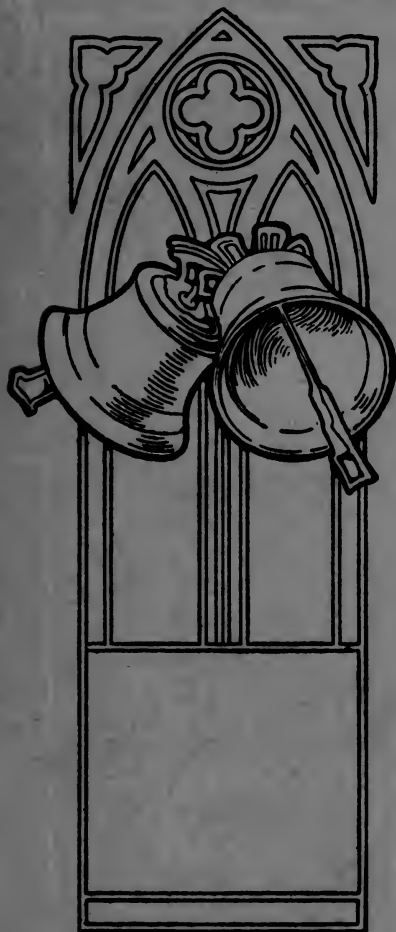


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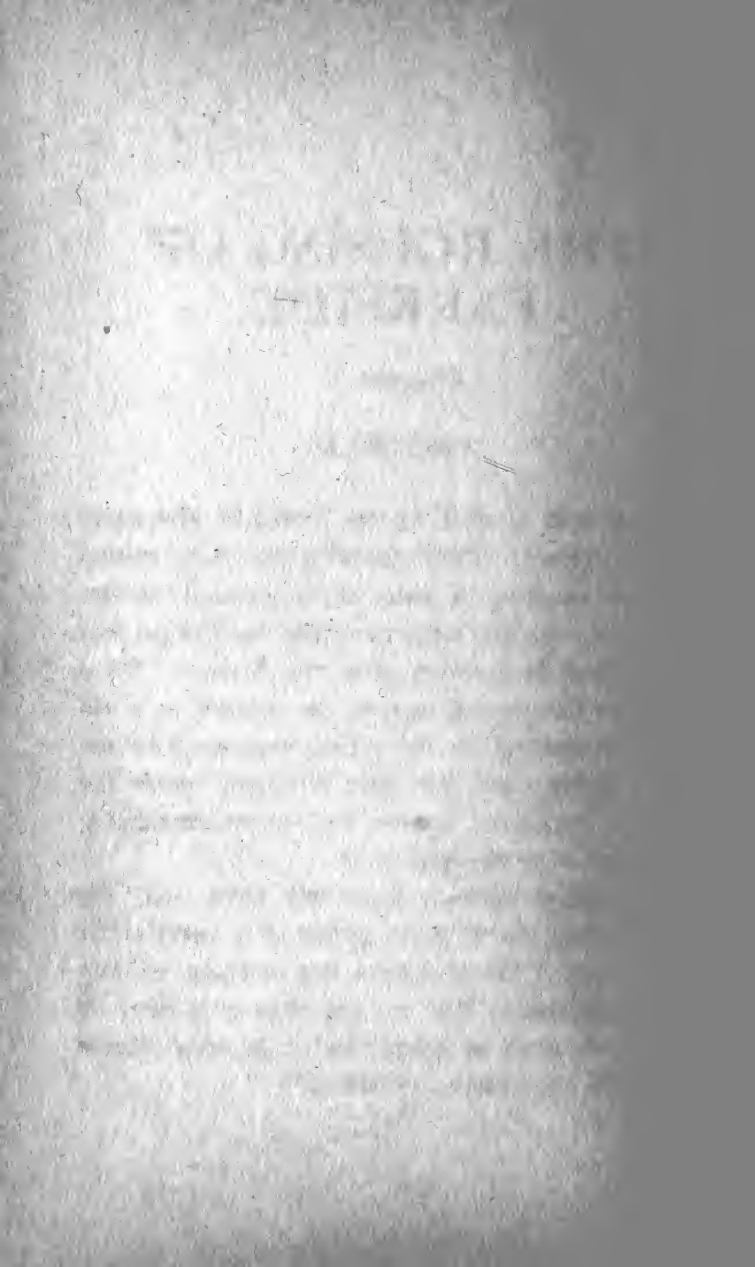
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TO HETTY GANSON HAVENS



THE ROUSING OF PARKSIDE

Chapter I

TROUBLE

There was trouble in the Parkside Memorial Sunday School. That was why the young minister was wearing a look of unwonted worry. That was why the officers of the institution had been asked to remain after the session. That was why the young man in the gallery was impatiently waiting for the young woman librarian.

The Bible class had just filed out when the minister beckoned to the half dozen remaining to gather near the platform.

"I want to have a little talk with you," he said as they drew their chairs in a semi-circle about him. "It concerns the welfare of our Sunday School. You are the ones who have its interest deepest at heart, and it is your advice I want in the present situation."

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He paused and looked seriously at each of his listeners.

"You refer, I surmise," said Superintendent Minchin coldly, "to the attendance."

"I refer," replied the young minister, "to the lack of attendance."

The directness of the response startled the other members of the little group and for a few moments there was silence.

"What are you going to do about it?" suddenly asked Miss Alicia Crosby, whose inharmonious voice was not in keeping with her position of musical leader.

"I don't know," frankly admitted the young minister. "That's why I have asked you to meet with me. I want your opinions. I was called to this church less than four months ago. At that time the attendance in our Sunday School did not seem as large as it should be. Each Sunday has shown a falling-off, and today we have reached the low water mark for the past three years. I know, because I have been going over the record books. And so I want the opinion of each of you as to the cause of this unfortunate condition. Mr. Minchin, may we have your views first?"

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The lean and forlorn-looking superintendent replied in his characteristic, rasping tone.

"I understand the reason perfectly," he said. "It would be odd for me to be superintendent of this Sunday School fourteen years without understanding the reason. But let me tell you, sir, that knowing the reason will in no way influence me to change our present methods. Do you understand my position, Dr. Holmes?"

The minister shook his head and smiled.

"I don't even understand your view of the reason," he answered.

"Then, sir, let me explain," went on the angry superintendent. "The reason for our falling-off in attendance is that I am conducting this Sunday School upon the same religious and honorable policy that has been pursued since the foundation of the institution. On the other hand, what have the other churches of the vicinity been doing? If you don't know, I can tell you. They are stealing our pupils away from us. They are not playing fair. They are making of their Sunday Schools places of entertainment rather than institutions of religious instruction."

Each succeeding sentence had been more demonstrative than its predecessor, and when the

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superintendent paused he wiped the perspiration from his heated brow.

"He's right," agreed Miss Alicia Crosby, with an earnestness that almost equaled that of the hungry-looking Minchin. "Why, my own nephew ran away from here when my back was turned last Sunday and went to the Sunday School across the street. I learned from him afterwards that they give buttons for good attendance. Think of it, material rewards for religious endeavor!"

She indignantly drew herself up at the conclusion of her remarks and elevated her eyebrows to show her disdain for the methods of the Sunday School across the street.

Wilton Forman, the manly young teacher of the Bible class, vainly tried to repress a smile, as he observed, "They'll soon be giving trading stamps, won't they?"

"Sir!" reprimanded the touchy superintendent. "Sir, this is no time for jesting."

Dr. Holmes, whose smile at the pleasantry had been unnoticed, came to the rescue.

"Mr. Woodrow," he said, "you are secretary of the Sunday School — what is your opinion?"

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The official addressed, a sickly-looking young man, meekly replied, "I agree absolutely with Superintendent Minchin."

"And you, Mr. Lester," said the minister, "you are our treasurer—have you given the matter any thought?"

"Some," replied Thomas Lester, a pleasant-faced man of middle age. "While the attendance has been dropping off, the receipts have been dropping off, and the less money we have to spend, the less attractive our Sunday School necessarily becomes."

"Oh, you believe it's unattractive?" interposed the superintendent sarcastically.

"Maybe you'd have it appear more like a theatre," added the unpleasant Miss Crosby.

The treasurer drew his lips tightly together and remained silent.

"Have you anything to say, Mr. Forman?" the minister asked the Bible class teacher.

"Nothing," answered the young man who did not seek another squelching.

"Let me see," said Dr. Holmes, "we have heard from all excepting you, Miss Burns. What are your views?"

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The young woman addressed hesitated, blushed a little, and replied, "I'd rather not give them, if you don't mind."

"But this is a confidential meeting, Miss Burns," went on the minister, "and I'm sure that none of us would resent any opinion that is frankly spoken."

"Well then," declared the librarian, as she glanced up at the young man waiting for her in the gallery, "I believe we're too old-fashioned in our methods and that we haven't kept pace with the progress of the other Sunday Schools. I visited the one across the street, two weeks ago to-day, and I'm sure no one could find fault with the manner the services were conducted. They were more entertaining, it is true, but it is also true that they were none the less religious on that account."

She stopped abruptly, and her flush deepened under the glare of the indignant superintendent and the director of music.

"I take that," said Mr. Minchin bitterly, "as a direct charge of mismanagement against me from one of the under officials."

"Stop, please," protested Dr. Holmes. "It was upon my request that Miss Burns gave her

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candid opinion, and she will be neither rebuked nor criticized for it."

His voice had become stronger, and he leaned forward slightly as he talked.

There was another pause, during which Miss Crosby arose.

"I must be going," she announced quietly. "I do not care to be mixed in an affair that involves personal abuse."

"There, there, Miss Crosby," said the minister calmly. "There is no personal abuse in what has been said. We are merely threshing out the question as to what is the matter with the Sunday School."

"That," interrupted the superintendent, "is saying that there is something the matter with it."

The promise of interesting developments was too much for the director of music, and she resumed her chair condescendingly.

The minister was irritated at the superintendent's last challenge, and the promptness with which he accepted it startled even the teacher of the Bible class, who had been endeavoring to conceal his amusement ever since the superintendent rebuked him.

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"Yes," responded Dr. Holmes, "I believe there is something the matter with the Sunday School. We are all too close to its interests. I wish we could have the opinion of an outsider."

His gaze naturally drifted about the big room and suddenly rested upon the figure of the man in the gallery.

"Who is that?" he asked.

Mary blushed.

"That is a gentleman waiting for me," she answered, "a Mr. Barker."

The shades had been pulled down in the gallery so that the features and attire of the young man were scarcely discernible. Otherwise the minister might have hesitated before asking, "Won't you invite him to join us? He might tell us how the service impressed him this morning."

For a moment Mary hesitated. She knew that Mr. Barker had a keen commercial sense and that if this had been a business meeting or a theatrical performance or a political session, he could have given a valuable criticism. But she knew that her friend was not an authority on church matters. In fact, she recalled, unhappily, that this very morning he had said, "It's the first time

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I've been in a Sunday School in twelve years."

As these matters flashed through her mind she thought she would make an excuse for not calling him; but then she realized what the effect of such procedure would be as she glanced at the superintendent and his musically inclined champion.

They were glaring ironically from her to the gallery and back again, and it was with almost defiance that she complied with the minister's request and said, "I will call him."

As she proudly walked up the main aisle, the superintendent remarked, his words not being directed toward anyone, "It's a most unusual procedure."

"What will the deacons say?" asked Miss Crosby of nobody in particular.

Mary Burns stopped below the gallery rail and motioning called, "Will you come down, John?"

The young man nodded his assent, disappeared, and in a few moments joined Mary in the main aisle.

"They want to speak with you, John," whispered Mary in trepidation.

"What have I done?" asked John, stopping short.

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"Sh-h," cautioned Mary. "They want to know your opinion of the service."

"It was awful," whispered her companion as they resumed walking.

"Tell them so then," advised Mary, and in a few paces they had joined the official gathering.

"Dr. Holmes," said Mary, "may I present my friend, Mr. Barker?"

The two men shook hands, and there was a smile on the face of each, due partly to cordiality, but more especially to the humor of the situation.

Barker was saying to himself, "What am I up against?"

Dr. Holmes was meditating, "Our consulting expert doesn't seem exactly suited to his calling."

In the bright sunlight Mary's friend appeared different from what he seemed in the shadow of the dark gallery. His natty light gray suit, his dull red tie, his light felt hat and his smart walking stick, made a strange contrast with the other men of the group who were garbed in their customary Sunday black.

But if John Hancock Barker appeared amus-

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ingly unique to them, they appeared much the same to him.

The minister presented the visitor to his associates and motioned him into a chair.

“Mr. Barker,” he said, “we’ve just been having a little discussion about the Sunday School, and it was suggested that we should get the opinion of an outsider as to our present service and how it might possibly be changed to increase our attendance. I happened to see you in the gallery, and Miss Burns was kind enough to bring you into our session. Will you be so good as to give us a candid opinion?”

“I am sorry to say,” replied John Hancock Barker, “that I am unwilling to comply with your request. My opinions are those of a man of business. If I ran a Sunday School, it would be on a business basis. I am so much in the commercial world that even the teaching of religion should be a business in my mind. Please understand that I do not hold the profession of minister or Sunday School superintendent any lower than does the most devout church member, but I do regard their work of teaching religion as business. The more good they inspire in the world, the more successfully do they conduct this

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business. You do not agree with my views, so you must excuse me from commenting on the service I attended this morning."

His answer was so different from anything that had been anticipated that the little group stared at him in astonishment.

"But why," asked Dr. Holmes, "do you say that we disagree with you in our views? We have not said so. How can you assume it?"

The visitor smiled.

"My reason is simple enough," he answered. "Nothing could have been further from business than what I saw here this morning."

This announcement deeply stirred the indignation of the superintendent, the secretary and the director of music; it amused the teacher of the Bible class and the treasurer; it inspired a twinkle in the eye of the minister, and it held the admiration of the gratified librarian.

Dr. Holmes coughed slightly and then asked, "Wouldn't you be willing, Mr. Barker, to sum up your opinions in a few words?"

"In one word," assented the newcomer, "and that is 'funereal.'"

The teacher of the Bible class laughed out loud and tried to stop himself by kicking his left ankle

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with his right foot, failing, however, through the intervention of the table leg.

The superintendent did not heed him. He was writing in a notebook.

"And how," went on the minister, "would you change matters if you, a business man, assumed charge of such an institution? Whether or not we would wish to follow your advice is, of course, a matter of no consequence to you, but I am sure Superintendent Minchin and myself would appreciate your suggestions."

Minchin, little beads of perspiration rising on his forehead as he wrote, finished his note with a flourish and looked up.

"I'm not so sure of that," said Barker, as he glanced amusedly at the over-heated superintendent. "My criticism might not meet with — the professor's approval," he added, as he nodded at the hungry-looking leader of the Sunday School.

The superintendent arose.

"Say what you please, for all of me, young man," he said, addressing Barker in a shrill, high-pitched voice. "In fact, no one here need regard my feelings nor my methods any longer. This note," he held up the paper upon which

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he had been writing, "tells why. You, Dr. Holmes," he said, turning to the minister, "have been here a few months. I have been superintendent of this Sunday School for fourteen years." His voice broke. "Apparently with this young man's criticisms to aid you, you understand conditions better than I do." He handed his paper to the minister. "My resignation, Dr. Holmes, which you may rest assured will not be accepted by the pillars of this church until an investigation has been made. Fourteen years," his voice broke again, "and to think things have come to this!"

Alicia Crosby produced and used her handkerchief and arising took her place beside the superintendent.

"I'm sorry," said the minister. "I didn't want to hurt your feelings."

The superintendent did not heed his words, but hastened up the aisle followed by the conductor of music. Secretary Woodrow gathered up his books and asked, "Do you require me any longer, Dr. Holmes?"

"No," replied the minister, "you may go now, Arthur."

The treasurer looked dubious.

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"I'm afraid Minchin will make a nasty wrangle of it," he said as he looked at his watch.

"I fear nothing," responded the minister, "and don't let me detain you any longer."

The treasurer bowed to those remaining and walked away.

The teacher of the Bible class held out his hand to the minister.

"Dr. Holmes," he said, "I'm with you. Let me know if I can be of service in this matter."

"Thank you," came the appreciative response. "I'll call upon you, if occasion arises, Wilton."

As the young man departed, John Hancock Barker rubbed the back of his head with his large muscular right hand. Then he looked at the minister earnestly.

"I'm afraid, Doctor, that I've put things to the bad. I'm sorry that I was called in, but I assure you I didn't intend to irritate the old — I mean the ex-superintendent."

"That's all right," laughed the minister cheerily, as he patted him on the shoulder. "Your opinion was frank and more than that, it was justified. Only I don't know just what to do next."

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The young man's countenance showed that he had a new idea.

"I — I — guess I'd better be going," he said.

"Tell it, John," said Mary.

"Tell what?" asked Barker.

"You were going to say something then. You know you were, John."

"Yes, I was going to give some more advice," agreed the young man unwillingly. "But I think I've handed out enough of that for one Sunday."

There was an awkward pause. Then Mary's face brightened.

"Mr. Barker," she said, "would you mind taking these books into the library for me and filing them according to the numbers?"

"Glad to," answered the young man, pleased at the opportunity of getting away.

He was scarcely out of hearing when Mary turned to the minister.

"Dr. Holmes," she said, "Mr. Barker is a wonderful organizer. He may seem a little forward to you, but that's only his manner which enables him to practice what he calls the 'Ginger Cure.' I know of several propositions he's taken hold of, and in every case he's made a success.

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I feel partly responsible for this trouble, but I'm sure that Mr. Barker could bring about a great change for the better in the Sunday School."

"There, there, Miss Burns," soothed the minister. "You mustn't feel at all disturbed over this matter. I liked your friend's suggestions, and I would be happy to have him as a counselor until everything is adjusted. Here he comes. We'll ask him."

John Hancock Barker was walking briskly back from his errand, and as he approached the two, Dr. Holmes addressed him.

"Mr. Barker," he said, "I want to ask a favor of you. I know something of your business ability and would like to call upon you for counsel until the disturbed condition of our Sunday School is adjusted."

The young man held up his hand.

"You must excuse me, Doctor," he objected. "This is not at all in my line. I'm an adman, a commercial expert, a past-master in the art of publicity. I will admit that when I was called here to give you my opinion a few minutes ago, I was performing my first executive service for a religious institution. The results indicate that I stirred things up. I always do when I think they

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need it. But now I hope you will excuse me from further participation."

There was the sound of footsteps on the center aisle, and turning the trio saw Treasurer Lester approaching.

"Ah — Dr. Holmes," he gasped, "I have just had a talk with Deacon Smalley. He says that Mr. Minchin has spoken to him already. Our former superintendent insists that the Sunday School be placed in your hands for the next month. It's because he believes under your management it will run down and strengthen his position. Then he expects to be recalled in a manner that would reflect discredit upon you."

"Thank you," said the minister. "I appreciate your promptness in notifying me."

The treasurer bowed and hastened away.

For a moment the trio was silent. Suddenly Mary whispered something in her companion's ear, and he nodded half willingly. Then he extended his hand to the clergyman whose expression for the first time had become discouraged.

"Doctor," he said, "I'm with you. If we don't put it all over every Sunday School in the city during the next four weeks and make that ex-

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superintendent eat his words, then my name isn't John Hancock Barker."

"Thank you," said the minister warmly, his face brightening as he took the adman's hand. "I believe we can do it."

"It's my practice," said Barker, with a sudden solemnity foreign to his manner, "not to work on Sunday. Will four o'clock here, to-morrow afternoon, be agreeable for a meeting?"

"It will," came the enthusiastic response.

"It's going to be all right," cried Mary encouragingly to the minister. "Goodbye."

"Thank you, Miss Burns," said the minister warmly.

"So long, Doctor," laughed the adman, and the conference was ended.

An hour later, John Hancock Barker was at one end of a telephone wire and his tailor at the other end.

"I want a black suit," said the former.

"For whom?" asked the other.

"For me, John Hancock Barker."

There was a laugh at the other end of the line.

"What kind?"

"Religious. You know, the kind a Sunday School superintendent would wear."

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“What is it, Mr. Barker, a masquerade?”

“Nope.”

“A funeral, then?”

John Hancock Barker thought of Superintendent Minchin.

“Incidentally, yes,” he answered; “and say, it’s got to be ready Saturday night.”

Chapter II

NEW METHODS

The next Sunday the attendance again fell off at the Parkside Memorial Sunday School. Except that there were fewer chairs occupied, everything looked very much the same as on preceding Sabbath mornings. There was a big dial, however, on the platform, with the word "Attendance" written across the center. After the fashion of a clock face there were little numbered lines at the circumference. Dividing the circumference into four equal parts were heavy lines, the first to the extreme right marked "one hundred," the second at the bottom of the circle marked "two hundred," the third at the extreme left marked "three hundred" and the one at the top marked "four hundred."

There was a large white square sheet back of the center of the platform, and there were several musical instruments lying on the top of the grand piano.

It was five minutes before the time to open

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the service when Miss Mary Burns, accompanied by a young man dressed in faultless black from his silk hat to his patent leather shoes, entered the vestibule.

"You look splendid in them," whispered his pretty companion.

"But I feel," he muttered, "as if I were going to have my picture taken."

"It was so thoughtful of you, too," she added. "They are just the thing for this undertaking."

He looked himself over.

"Undertaking is right," he said.

They walked down the main aisle, and Mary introduced her companion to several of the Sunday School teachers who were gathered about the library. Then she went to find the minister.

Dr. Holmes had just come from the service in the church. His expression was disturbed as he greeted Mary. His eye traveled quickly around the room, and then he said anxiously, "He hasn't come yet, has he?"

"Why yes," replied Mary, "that is, if you mean Mr. Barker. He's over there."

Dr. Holmes stared in the direction indicated and after a moment smiled.

"I didn't recognize him," he said.

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The adman turned and saw them and then crossed to Dr. Holmes.

"Everything's all ready," he assured the pastor. "If you'll signal to Miss Wagar, the orchestra will play the overture—I mean the opening number."

"Very well," replied the pastor as he smiled and looked at his watch. "It's time now." He mounted the platform, and nodded to an attractive young woman who had just taken her place at the piano. She, in turn, signaled to several boys and girls who came forward and picked up the instruments that had been lying upon the platform. Another signal and the first orchestra of the Parkside Memorial Sunday School was playing the opening hymn with remarkable smoothness for a newly assembled organization.

John Hancock Barker walked about the room carefully making observations. He was greeted cordially by Thomas Lester, but he noticed that the treasurer was very nervous. Wilton Forman, teacher of the Bible class, failed to recognize him at first in the new suit, and then restrained with difficulty his amused feelings.

In the rear of the room sat the former superintendent, the late leader of music, who had re-

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signed the Monday before, and Deacon Smalley. The trio paid no heed to the adman as he passed them, although he endeavored to catch the eyes of Timothy Minchin and Alicia Crosby. When he was some paces away he fancied that he heard his name mentioned by the deacon, and the words "sport" and "red tie" drifted to him from the others.

The hymn finished, the minister offered a prayer, the warmth and brevity of which was in strong contrast to the cold and long-winded efforts of the former superintendent. The responsive reading followed.

Dr. Holmes then announced that twenty minutes instead of the usual half hour would be allowed for class work. This statement was greeted with manifest approval by teachers and scholars alike. When the lesson time was concluded, the second hymn was sung with the spirited accompaniment of the new orchestra.

Barker was standing not far from the trio of critical observers in the back of the room. As the school reached the chorus of the hymn, Miss Crosby raised her right hand to her ear.

"Isn't it dreadful?" she exclaimed.

"Screechy!" agreed the ex-superintendent.

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"I rather like it," said the Deacon, and Barker walked away smiling.

When the contributions had been collected, Dr. Holmes arose and addressed the school.

"We are going to try several experiments," he said, "to make our Sunday School as useful, practical and attractive as possible. We want our teachers and scholars to come here not as a duty but as a privilege, and we are going to try to make our service such that the spirit of peace and goodwill and righteous doing may be with us, not only on Sunday, but every day."

There was a disapproving sniff from the back of the room that caused those near to stare at Miss Alicia Crosby.

"Our former superintendent, Timothy Minchin, has resigned after many years of faithful service," went on Dr. Holmes, and Barker noticed with pleasure that there was no evidence of regret among those present. "The man who will manage our experiment will tell you more about it," continued the minister. "He will not accept a title of office, as he says that he merely wishes to introduce methods that we can carry out later. His name is Mr. John Hancock Barker, and he will talk to you now."

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Ex-superintendent Minchin was evidently horrified.

"The nerve of him!" he whispered, and those in the rear seats glared indignantly, for Timothy Minchin had not been popular during his long regime.

The adman acknowledged the minister's bow and stepped to the front of the platform.

"Dr. Holmes," he began, "has told you in general of our new policy. I will not add much to what he has said because I would prefer to have you notice the changes as we make them." He referred to a card in his hand. "In the first place, you have heard the pleasant music of our little orchestra. We believe that the little orchestra will increase in size and harmony just as the entire Sunday School will live up to its new slogan, 'Watch us grow.'"

The adman directed his gaze at the rear of the room and amusedly noted the displeasure his words were causing the former superintendent.

"After Sunday School," he went on, "I want each pupil who plays any instrument to hand in his or her name. I also want the names of those who have taken singing lessons. Music is to

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have a more important part in our service than heretofore."

He drew his right hand back to his hip and would have slipped it into his pocket had not the frock coat reminded him that he must maintain a dignity worthy of the place.

"Each Sunday," he continued, "we will have a speaker not connected with the Sunday School who will deal with Biblical matters in an entertaining way. Today Mr. Jordan Phillips, whose name is known to all of you, one of our leading manufacturers, will tell you briefly of his recent trip to the Holy Land and will show you beautiful stereopticon pictures of the spots that played important parts in the early days of Christianity."

John Hancock Barker paused and gazed from the body of the school to the left where Mary and several others were grouped near the library door, and to the right where the minister and a half dozen visitors were seated. Their glances confirmed his own opinion. He was making a hit, and he might have patted himself on the back had not the frock coat fitted him so snugly under the shoulders.

"Mr. Phillips," he said pleasantly, bowing to

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one of the group near the minister, and a moment later he formally introduced the speaker.

Using for his illustrations, slides of exceptional beauty, the manufacturer told in an easy and entertaining way the story of the Holy Land of today and referred briefly to Biblical events with which the school was familiar.

When he had concluded, John Hancock Barker again took the floor.

"We want to thank you, Mr. Phillips," he said, "and engage you, I should say invite you, to give us your talk on India at an early date."

Mr. Phillips nodded his assent, and Barker continued. "Next Sunday we will have a stereopticon talk on Egypt. It will be given by Jephtha Chandler, a member of our church. He will show you up-to-date — I mean modern pictures of the land of Moses."

There was no doubt that he had the interest of the entire school at heart.

"Wednesday night we will revive the Boys' Club, and believe me, young men, it will be a live organization. We have some fine plans, and with your help it will be the top-notch boys' club in the city. May I ask all the boys who will be here Wednesday night to rise?"

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Every boy in the room stood up.

"Thank you," he said. "You may be seated. And now for the girls. You're not to be neglected, young ladies. Miss Mary Burns is to have charge of the club now instead of Miss Crosby, and she has some pleasant surprises in store for you. She told me — but that would be telling. You'll have to come yourselves, Saturday, at two o'clock, to find out. All the little ladies who will be here will stand up so that we may know how much ice cream —" He stopped abruptly, and there was a general laugh throughout the room. Every girl was on her feet.

Barker turned to Mary. "I'm sorry, Miss Burns," he said, "I've given away one of your secrets, but then I know you've got others." He turned to the school and continued. "You may sit down, young ladies. There are a great many more things I would like to talk to you about, but time will not permit. Next Sunday, if you're very prompt, we will go into more plans for making this the best and the biggest Sunday School in the city."

There was some vigorous clapping, but the adman raised his hand.

"There must be no applauding," he announced

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solemnly, but with a sense of gratification. "This," he added, pointing to the big dial, "is to record our attendance."

A young man stepped to the platform and marked "97" at its proper place on the dial and then wrote "1st Sunday" after it.

"Today our attendance was only ninety-seven," continued the adman. "That's bad; but wait. This is the first Sunday under the new system. A week from today I'm sure you're going to bring back the scholars who've drifted away, by telling them of the pictures, of the boys' and girls' clubs and that there will be more surprises. Will you do this?"

There was a general shout of "Yes."

"On the fourth Sunday," the adman continued, "we'll have to put out the 'standing room only' sign."

"What's that?" piped a small voice.

Barker laughed.

"Bless your heart, that means we won't have enough chairs."

He turned to the minister.

"Dr. Holmes, will you pronounce the benediction, after which we will sing the closing hymn."

When the service was finished, the children did

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not scurry to leave, but took their time studying the attendance dial, reading the cards that had been given them and discussing the new manager and his methods.

There seemed to be approval among the teachers and pupils concerning the innovations, but the approval was not unanimous. In one of the back corners of the room, Timothy Minchin, Alicia Crosby, Deacon Smalley and several others were earnestly conferring. As the last stragglers among the children filed out, this little group proceeded towards the platform, where Dr. Holmes and Mary were congratulating Barker upon his successful debut as a Sunday School manager.

"You never lost their attention," said the minister.

"It was splendid," chimed in Mary.

"But the knockers haven't had a chance," observed the adman. He looked up as he spoke and saw the approaching group. "Ah," he added, "the anvil chorus is coming now."

Deacon Smalley headed the party and acted as spokesman.

"Dr. Holmes," he began, "this isn't to continue, I hope?"

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"You refer to our new manner of service?" asked the minister.

"It isn't a service," observed Minchin. "It's a vaudyville."

"I saw nothing out of the way," said the clergyman, "and for three more Sundays we'll continue. Then if the results indicate failure, we will again change our policies."

"And will you allow slang," queried Miss Crosby, "to be the prevailing talk?"

"I'll answer that," said Barker, keeping cool with some difficulty. "I'm not a preacher nor a superintendent, but a business man. My talk is the talk of the world of commerce. I'm sorry it isn't polished. But it's simple and easy to understand, and the children like it. I didn't want this job, but now that I've taken it, I'll make this Sunday School prosper despite its former handicaps."

He looked from the former director of music to the ex-superintendent.

"Supposing you are dismissed?" snapped Minchin.

"I'll cross that bridge when I get to it," smiled Barker, "and I'll be here on the fourth Sunday even if it takes an injunction suit to stop you

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from stopping me. But with broad-minded men such as Deacon Smalley to deal with, I am not afraid of interference."

He held out his hand to the leader of the party, who took it in spite of his feelings.

Barker looked at his watch.

"You'll have to excuse me," he said. "I'm on my way to visit one of the down town missions."

Mary joined him, and the group stood in wonderment as the two said their goodbyes and hastened away.

"I demand a meeting of the church officers," cried Minchin. "This outrage must be stopped."

"It's disgraceful," agreed Miss Crosby.

"I'll ask that the meeting be called," announced Deacon Smalley.

When Barker had left Mary at her door, he consulted his memorandum book, and glanced at the items on the page headed "Boys' Club." Then he went to the telephone and called up his tailor.

"This is John Hancock Barker," he said. "I want a new suit."

"Evening clothes?" asked the tailor. "You have everything else."

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"Wrong," called the adman.

"What kind of a suit will it be then?" inquired the tailor.

Barker looked at the boys' club page.

"Baseball," he said.

Chapter III

THE THIRD SUNDAY

Two weeks later there were several surprises for the children of the Parkside Memorial Sunday School. Those who entered the main room first gave forth delighted "ohs" and the later comers joined with joyful "ahs."

The old room with its dingy decorations and gloomy furnishings had been transformed into a bright and attractive hall. Comfortable chairs supplanted the wornout seats; practical tables took the place of wobbly ones; the Bible class room was curtained off with neat, new hangings. Cheerful paper covered the side walls, and the cleaned ceiling once more reflected light. There was a softer carpet on the floor and modern furniture on the refinished platform.

When the new clock on the gallery rail indicated that it still lacked five minutes of service time, the big room was two-thirds filled, and several of the older boys were carrying in chairs from the parlors.

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In the back of the room were gathered the officials of the church. The meeting demanded by Minchin had been called the Monday previous, and the request that the new manager be dismissed was refused. However, it was decided that the officials attend the next service in a body to determine whether or not Barker would be permitted to remain for the fourth Sunday.

The previous service had been even more successful than the first. The attendance, according to the dial, had been 201, or more than double that of the previous week. The innovations introduced were approved by the school, if not by the former superintendent and the late leader of music. But the slang of the manager would out, and a few of his pleasantries seemed rather flip-pant for a Sunday School. At any rate, there was enough out of the way in the minds of the "anvil chorus" to make the unusual demand that the officers of the church, eight in number, attend the service.

They were here.

The clock indicated the half hour.

An unfamiliar figure mounted the platform. It was that of a young man with clean-cut features

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and a determined expression. He wore clerical vestments, and he carried himself in a military style. Following him came John Hancock Barker. The adman nodded to Miss Wagar, the two men seated themselves, and the opening hymn was sung to the accompaniment of an orchestra that now numbered fourteen pieces.

The visitor lead the prayer in a manly and impressive style and then conducted the responsive reading. After the hymn that followed the lesson period, John Hancock Barker addressed the school.

“I’m glad we have an old chum of mine with us today,” he began, and, as he looked at the group in the rear of the room, he noticed considerable nudging which made him regret he had used the word “chum.” “The Reverend James Connell,” he continued, “was a schoolmate of mine, and a lively lad he was, too. He was captain of the baseball team, end on the ’leven, and he pulled seven on the crew. He lectures tomorrow night at the Armory, but he promises me that he will give us the best part of the talk here today with his prettiest pictures—Mr. Connell.” The young minister laughed as he took the adman’s place at the front of the platform.

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He gave an interesting talk on psychology in such simple language that all could understand, and his pictures and diagrams helped to fascinate his youthful audience. At the conclusion of his address, he told the story of a young man who had worked his way to the top as a publicity expert by virtue of vigor, energy and push. Then he drew a comparison. He told his hearers to employ enthusiasm in preparing their lessons, in attending their Sunday School, in performing acts of kindness to others. "Enthusiasm will help you to achieve happiness, prosperity and religion," he said warmly, "and you are fortunate in having as your guide in this school, my old classmate, the young man of whom I was speaking, who in the boyhood days when I knew him best was 'Ginger' Barker."

Mr. Connell had not only impressed the audience favorably, but he had added to the popularity of the already popular Sunday School manager.

John Hancock Barker, with a determination to keep slang in the background, again addressed the school.

"In the first place, teachers, pupils and friends," he began, "I am pleased to note that

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our attendance has grown. Is the report ready?"

A tall young man nodded and then marked 317 on the dial opposite the words "3rd Sunday." There was an "ah" of appreciation in all parts of the room.

"That sure is fine!" commented the adman, forgetting himself until he caught Mary's reproofing glance too late. "The collection is keeping pace with the attendance, and I believe the good we are doing is maintaining the same rate. And now I want to tell the girls about the boys and the boys about the girls. The boys, girls, have eighty-two members in their club. There's a baseball team, a debating section and a membership committee. This committee will please report."

Arthur McCaslin, a sturdy boy of fourteen, stepped forward and read:

"William Green's membership team has brought twenty-two new members into the Sunday School in ten days; Thomas Carter's team eighteen members; total forty. The team ahead the first of February gets a pennant for each member from Mr. Barker." He bowed and hurried back to his seat.

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"The girls, boys," went on Barker smiling, "have been busy, too. Nettie Gardner, will you report, please?"

A pretty girl of fifteen told of a sewing society, a reading club and a membership team that had been recently organized by the girls of the Sunday School under Miss Mary Burns' direction.

Twenty-nine new members had been added to the school, she said, but she stated further that this work was scarcely begun.

The adman then called attention to the new decorations and furnishings and gave the list of ten church members who had raised the necessary fund.

"We have arranged a public library branch for the Sunday School," he continued, "and Miss Burns will be able to help you more than ever with your reading. Next Sunday we shall have no stereopticon pictures."

He paused and noted the disappointment that greeted his announcement.

"Instead," he added, "we shall have moving pictures."

The pleasure the latest announcement gave discounted the effect of the earlier disappointment.

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In the back of the room, however, there was evidently much whispered protesting.

“The pictures,” went on Barker, “deal with the life of Moses and are as historically correct as it is possible to make them. A film company is now following my suggestion of making moving pictures exclusively for Sunday Schools, and, as a reward for the suggestion, we are to get them first and free. Since last Sunday we have organized an entertainment committee that is preparing a show — I mean — an entertainment to give in the social settlement houses. We find we have a great deal of talent. Will all those who have had experience in entertaining hand in their names to Miss Burns? Our first entertainment will be given here some evening next week, and only those who belong to the Sunday School can come. Next Sunday is the last for our experiment, and I hope the attendance will continue to grow. As you pass out today you will each receive a flower to take home. They are given with the compliments of one of the ladies of the church who does not wish her name announced. My good friend, Dr. Connell, will pronounce the benediction and then we will sing hymn number 37.”

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When the school was dismissed the group of officials in the rear of the room remained. Dr. Holmes was with them.

Near the platform stood John Hancock Barker, the Rev. Mr. Connell and Miss Burns, the latter two congratulating the adman upon the splendid success of his third Sunday.

"It looks as though it would be three, and out," laughed Barker as he nodded toward the rear of the room where the ex-superintendent was vigorously talking to the church officials.

"Not while Dr. Holmes has anything to say about it," put in Mary. "See! He's having his say now."

A few minutes later the minister came down the center aisle, and the group in the rear of the room disbanded.

"What's my sentence?" laughed Barker.

"It would have been hanging," smiled the minister, "if Minchin had his way. But I told them that if you went before the fourth Sunday, that I —. Well, they decided that you will again have the management of the school a week from to-day."

"I hope I haven't in any way jeopardized your good standing," said the adman seriously.

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"I'm afraid you have," answered the minister, "with Miss Alicia Crosby."

There was a general laugh, and then Barker took the minister aside. He talked hurriedly and nodded several times towards Mr. Connell. Whatever he said seemed to meet with the approval of Dr. Holmes.

A few minutes later, Mr. Connell excused himself, and Barker and Miss Burns were about to take their leave of the clergyman. Suddenly Dr. Holmes gripped the adman's hand.

"You can never understand, John," he said, "how much I appreciate your kindness in doing what you are doing for this Sunday School. To think there are people contemptible enough to try to oppose you! See how beautiful this room is today in comparison with the dingy old hall of a week ago, and to look into the happy faces of the children this morning who came here, not because their parents sent them, but through the love of this institution, was an inspiration. It has been fine of you, and I only hope that some day I can partly repay you."

He talked fervently, and his words impressed the two young people before him.

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"Thank you, Doctor," said the adman. "You just can do that, some day."

"Name the way, then."

For a moment the adman hesitated. Then he turned to Mary. "You've forgotten that book you promised to get me from the library, haven't you?"

"That's so, I have," she answered. "I'll get it at once."

She hurried away, and John Hancock Barker smiled.

He nodded after Mary, and then he patted himself over the heart and said, "You know the way, Doc.—I mean, Doctor. You know the way, but I don't know the day."

"It will indeed be a pleasure," smiled Dr. Holmes, "and may the day be soon."

The two men shook hands, and when Mary returned with the book, John Hancock Barker walked home with her.

"Do you remember a little talk we had three weeks ago today, Mary?" he asked.

"Do you mean on the way to Sunday School?" she inquired.

"That was the talk," answered John. "Do you recall that you found fault with me? I'd

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been talking about hurrying up the day, and you scolded me. You said that there were a number of things in your life that I didn't care for, but the only one that seemed of any importance concerned the Sunday School. Do you remember you asked me how long it had been since I was inside of a Sunday School?"

"Yes," she answered, "you told me it had been twelve years."

"And I agreed to sit up in the gallery because nobody would notice me there, and then when the service was over and I looked forward to walking home with you, I was hauled out of the gallery and made the superintendent."

Mary laughed. "It is funny, isn't it?" she said.

"In some ways, yes," he replied. "The first Sunday, though, it didn't seem funny a little bit. When I got up there in these funeral clothes and faced that gang of kiddies, I almost had stage fright. But honest, Mary, I'm getting to like it."

"I'm very glad, John."

"Say, this isn't what I started out to say at all. Going back to that conversation of three weeks ago, you said you weren't quite ready to discuss the date for pulling off an event that's of more importance to me than any date since

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my first birthday. You wanted me to show an interest in church work first."

He looked down at the ground and then straight into her eyes. "Haven't I made good, Mary?"

She hesitated, and then drew a long breath. "Not yet, John," she answered. "You've got one Sunday to go."

"And then?"

"Why, John Hancock Barker, we've gone two blocks by my street!"

A half hour later, the adman picked up his telephone. He gave his tailor's number, and a few seconds later reached that individual.

"I guess you can make that evening suit for me," he said.

"Thank you, Mr. Barker," came the answer.

"Say, how did you know that this is Mr. Barker?"

"Because," replied the tailor, "you're the only customer I've got who orders his clothes on Sunday."

"Oh," exclaimed the adman.

"For a wedding?" asked the tailor.

John Hancock Barker smiled.

"I hope so!"

Chapter IV

THE DAY AFTER

It was the Monday after the Fourth Sunday. John Hancock Barker had just arrived at his office. There was a beautiful bouquet in the vase on top of his filing cabinet, and there was a fat stack of letters heaped on his desk. The morning papers were opened and laid beside the letters. Blue pencil marks around a half column article attracted his eye first. He read the display head:

SUNDAY SCHOOL DRAWS TOO MANY

**Hundreds of Boys and Girls
Are Turned Away From
Parkside Memorial**

**New Methods of John Hancock
Barker Prove Remarkably
Successful**

His eye traveled rapidly down the page.

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"Not a bad story," he said, "and it's pretty nearly correct."

He glanced over the other papers and found the marked article in each about the same as the first he read. Then he turned to his mail.

He picked up the top letter. "Congratulations on the new record," he read.

"Well, 502 wasn't bad," he mused, "when I only set out to get four hundred. Besides, there were two hundred on the outside."

He smiled. "What's this?" He picked up the second epistle and read: "I am sending four pictures for the Sunday School walls that I bought last summer in Jerusalem. I hope you'll like them." He laid the second letter with the first.

"She thinks I'm a permanent official," he laughed.

The third envelope contained a substantial check for the Bible fund, and the fourth suggested a well-known speaker who would be willing to address the school. As he picked up the fifth, there was a knock on the door.

"Come in," he called.

Treasurer Lester entered and shook hands warmly.

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"Wasn't it wonderful?" he exclaimed.

"Yesterday?"

"Of course."

"Yes, the attendance was fine," said the adman.

"I don't mean the attendance," objected Mr. Lester. "I mean the collection. You remember we didn't have time to count it. Well, it totals one hundred and twenty-two dollars and eighteen cents more than the highest record in the history of Parkside Memorial."

"That's gratifying, indeed," admitted Barker. "Won't you be seated?"

"Thank you, I can't," replied the treasurer. "I've got to hurry around and pay off some old debts incurred when Minchin was superintendent. Goodbye."

"Goodbye."

The treasurer turned towards the door and then stopped.

"You — you wouldn't mind my saying something?" he suddenly asked.

"Why, I'd be glad to hear whatever you'd like to say," assured the adman.

"You — you're a wonder!" stammered the treasurer. "Goodbye."

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"Thank you," smiled Barker. "Come again."

The door closed, and the adman picked up the next letter. It was from Mr. Connell, and it carried cheerful words concerning the achievement of the day before.

There was another knock on the door, and this time Wilton Forman, teacher of the Bible class, entered. He, too, shook Barker's hand warmly and expressed his congratulations.

"My, but you hit old Minchin hard," he laughed. "Did you see his face when the attendance was posted on the wheel and you couldn't stop the applause?"

"No, I didn't see him," answered Barker.

"Well — but that isn't what I came for. Our class has just doubled during the last four weeks, and we kind of thought maybe you'd like a little remembrance of us. It was you did the doubling, and we wanted you to have this Bible with the names of all the old members here and the new boys here."

"It's a beauty!" cried Barker. "Thank you, and will you thank the others for me?"

"They want you to come out and conduct the class when you can because they — well, they like your style better than mine."

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"Nonsense!" exclaimed Barker. "But you can tell them I'll come."

"Goodbye!"

"Goodbye!"

The sixth letter carried the congratulations of the primary department, the seventh an appreciation from Dr. Holmes, and the eighth and ninth had nothing to do with the Sunday School. They were only business, and they were quickly dismissed. The tenth didn't get attention immediately because of another rap on the door.

Arthur McCaslin and Nettie Gardner, Presidents of the Boys' Club and the Girls' Club, the former a little more abashed than the latter, entered. Each shook hands with the adman, and Nettie acted as spokesman.

"You didn't come to the picnic Saturday, Mr. Barker," she said.

"No," replied the adman, "I was very sorry, but I was too busy getting things ready for yesterday. It was a great success, I hear."

"We beat the West Side Sunday School eight to two," put in Arthur.

"Splendid!" cried Barker.

"Jimmie Armstrong," went on the boy, "says it was your coaching done it — I mean did it."

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"Well, I'm glad to have helped," said Barker.

"We held an election," observed Miss Gardner.

"An election of what kind?" asked the adman.

"Of Sunday School superintendent," answered Arthur.

"Why, how could you do that?" asked Barker.

"The church officers do that."

"We know," replied Nettie, "but my father says that expressions of those interested helps to elect, and he's a politician."

"I see," said the adman.

"There was four candidates," volunteered Arthur. "There was Mr. Lester, Mr. Forman, Mr. Woodrow and yourself."

"And how did it come out?" inquired Barker.

"Mr. Woodrow got one vote," said Arthur, "and —"

"Mr. Forman got seven," announced Nettie, "and —"

"Mr. Lester got eleven," said Arthur, "and you got —"

"Two hundred and fourteen!" cried both together.

"Thank you very much, Nettie and Arthur, for coming to tell me, but I can't accept. How-

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ever, I'll come to see you at the school whenever I can."

"That's better than not at all," admitted Nettie sorrowfully.

"Gee, but the kids will feel bad," assured Arthur.

John Hancock Barker opened the door for the children when they rose to say goodbye. He watched them get into the elevator and drew a deep breath. As he was closing the door, another elevator stopped and several familiar figures stepped out. There was Deacon Smalley and with him four other officials of the church.

For a moment there flashed into his mind the thought that they might have imagined he wanted to continue in service and that Minchin had prevailed upon them to stop him.

They entered gravely, and Deacon Smalley introduced one of the men whom Barker had not met before.

"Our mission," began the dried up little deacon, "concerns your connection with the Sunday School."

"It's coming," thought the adman. "They're here to fire me, although it isn't necessary."

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"We like some of your reforms very much," went on the solemn Smalley.

"They're letting me down easy," mused Barker.

"The idea of providing each book of the Bible in separate covers we find by investigation is causing the children and their families to indulge much more in Biblical reading."

"Your moving picture idea," put in Mr. Willson, "makes it far easier for the children to comprehend the stories of the good book."

"The orchestra," added Deacon Jasper, "is a feature that attracts much favorable comment. There are fourteen pieces now, are there not?"

"Eighteen," answered Barker pleasantly.

"Our mission," continued Deacon Smalley, "is to tell you of a meeting of our officers held a half hour ago. We have decided, Mr. Barker —"

"Here comes the blow," thought the adman.

"We have decided," went on the Deacon, "to ask you to become our permanent superintendent."

John Hancock Barker was dumbfounded for a moment.

"Thank you, gentlemen," he said, "but I cannot accept. However, the Sunday School is now

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playing to capacity — I mean is as well attended as the size will permit, and its success seems assured. I have suggested my good friend, Dr. Connell, to Mr. Holmes, and I'm sure he's a better man for the place than I am."

The others didn't seem so sure.

Disappointed, the quintet said goodbye and filed away.

The eleventh letter contained among other things, the words, "You might come out and talk over the matter you mentioned the first Sunday. You made good on the Fourth Sunday."

The adman touched that letter to his lips before he picked up the last.

It contained a bill — a tailor bill for one hundred and sixty-five dollars.

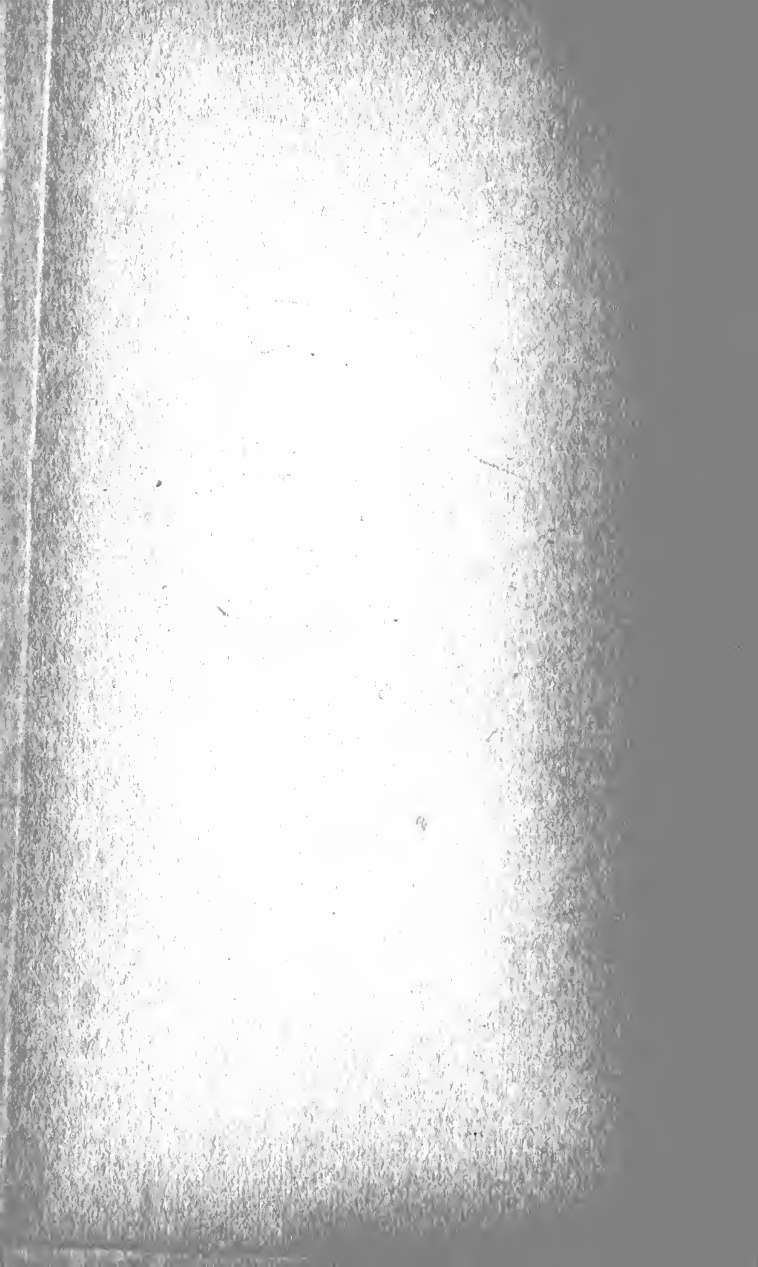
John Hancock Barker smiled.

"It was worth it!" he said.

The End









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